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Sydney research man does it

Dream discovery in atomic field, says scientist

ANNOUNCING "a discovery of fundamental importance to atomic research" last night Professor Harry Messel, Professor of Physics at Sydney University, said a member of his research team had made "the sort of discovery scientists dream about."

The discoverer is Mr. G. S. Shrikantia, an Indian working for a Ph.D. degree in physics.

The find concerns the power of particles comprising an atom, and is either a previously unknown component or a known fundamental particle decaying in a new manner.

The problem of forces within the nucleus of an atom has occupied scientists for many years, he said, and the Sydney discovery has taken them one more positive step along the road to its solution.

The discovery has its origin in an expedition arranged by the University of Bristol, England.

Sydney University, together with 10 others from different parts of the world, shared the cost of sending the expedition to Sardinia in the Mediterranean where it released balloons carrying photographic plates up to 14 miles high to be exposed to cosmic radiation.

Asked what the immediate practical value of the find will be, Professor Messel said:

"There is no immediate practical value.

"That is like asking the immediate practical values of a new-born baby.

"The baby may grow up to be President of the United States or run a two-up school."

A hundred of the exposed plates were sent back to Sydney, and while examining them, Mr. Shrikantia made his discovery.

'Fortunate'

Fortunately, said Professor Messel, the phenomena "operated" at the time one of the plates destined for Sydney was exposed.

He said every research group in the world would now be watching for the phenomona and it may be years before it is observed again.

"Scientifically, the discovery is of stupendous value."